



## **500.60 Digital Imaging / Photographs Recording**

Number Series: 500—Operational

Sheriff's Approval: Digital

Approved Date: August 5, 2018

Review Due Date: August 5, 2021

Review Frequency: 3- Years

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### **POLICY**

The Hendry County Sheriff's Office will ensure that images documenting crime scenes are preserved in order to maintain their integrity as evidence. With the advent and utilization of digital technology, it is important that measures are taken to preserve the integrity of the image and the chain of custody.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **A. General Information**

1. Cameras used for digital photography need a minimum of 3.0 mega pixels (3.2 MP gross), an on-camera viewer, close-up (macro) capability, flash and removal image memory card or device of at least 8 to 16 MB.
2. Digital images captured with either a digital camera or scanner are considered original images and are equivalent to a negative in film-based photography. A separate storage media (compact disc [CD] or digital versatile disc [DVD] is used to save images from each case.
  - a. Use a ruler as a scale in close-up photographs for comparison purposes.
  - b. Use the automatic mode unless conditions warrant otherwise.
  - c. Set the camera's resolution/image quality to the highest quality using the JPEG format unless conditions warrant otherwise.
3. All evidentiary photographs/images taken for the purpose of documentation and investigative procedures remains the property of the Hendry County Sheriff's Office.

#### **B. Training**

1. Prior to authorization to use any agency digital photographic equipment, personnel are to be trained in the operation, care, and maintenance of the issued equipment as well as chain of custody and image security. Personnel performing digital enhancement techniques receive additional training approved by the Crime Scene Unit supervisor. Refresher training is to be conducted at least once every three years.

#### **C. Guidelines for crime scene photography**

1. The first photograph should always depict the case information. This can be accomplished by writing the case information along with the date, name and identification number of the person taking the images on a white piece of paper

- and photographing it and have another person provide narration on the tape recorder.
2. Photographic subject matter ranges from general to specific views.
    - a. Take overall photographs of the entire scene to show its relationship to the surrounding areas.
    - b. Take mid-range photographs to show the relationship of the evidence in the scene.
    - c. Take close-up photographs of evidence for comparison and identification purposes.
  3. When photographing people:
    - a. Identification photographs – facial-frontal
    - b. Mid-range photographs to show injuries and other body parts.
    - c. Close-up photograph with and without scale in regard to scars, marks, tattoos and injuries.
    - d. Use color setting, which shows bruising and abrasions better than black and white.
    - e. Include only one case investigation per digital download file, computer disc, or roll of film.
    - f. Include the following information in the written case report:
      1. Type of camera and type of digital media used
      2. Name of person taking the photographs
      3. What is being depicted in the photographs
      4. See section below for additional reporting and documentation requirements.
- D. All personnel are to place digital audio recorded interviews or digital images taken by a deputy to Case management system for detectives to have access to view or review the materials directly through the server.
- E. District Case Report Protocol
1. First, download all media to Case Management directly.
  2. Rename the attachment.
  3. For Arrest Cases
    - a. Forward to the State Attorney's Office in case management.
  4. For Externally Referred Cases
    - a. Forward to the referred agency in case management.
  5. Reporting and Documentation
    - a. Deputies should document compliance with this protocol in the crime scene paragraph of the case report
- F.
- G. Maintenance of issued cameras and associated equipment.
1. At the beginning of each shift, personnel are to ensure that his/her issued digital camera is in proper working order as follows:
    - a. The camera has ample formatted storage media (enough to document five cases per shift, minimum).
    - b. The camera battery or batteries are fully charged and an extra set of batteries is included with the camera
- H. Unauthorized Use

1. Evidentiary photographs/images may not be copied, printed, transmitted in any manner or form, or used for personal or non-departmental use without permission of the Sheriff or his/her designee.
2. No evidentiary photographs/images are to be stored by and/or transmitted to unauthorized individuals, nor are these format to be posted on the Internet without consent of the Sheriff or his/her designee. Utilization of any method or means for transferring digital data (downloading or uploading, electronic transfer such as phones, cell phones) electronically, without authorization, is also prohibited.
3. Photographs/images captured for publicity purposes are not the subject of legal and procedural requirements imposed upon evidentiary images. Publicity images are transferred to a CD or DVD and given to the requesting authority. These digital images are not verified or authenticated. Copies of the publicity images are not retained or otherwise archived unless approved by the Sheriff. Ceremonies for publicity purposes include award ceremonies, new-hire swear-in, promotional ceremonies, etc.
4. No public relation photographs/images are to be stored by and/or transmitted to unauthorized individuals, nor are these format to be posted on the Internet without consent of the Sheriff or designee. Utilization of any method or means for transferring digital data (downloading or uploading, electronic transfer such as phones, cell phones) electronically, without authorization, is also prohibited.

I. Evidentiary Audio and Video Recording

1. Items of evidence such as surveillance videos or audio recordings that are received from **external** sources are to be received, itemized on a property receipt, packaged and stored as evidence.
2. Evidentiary audio and video recordings received from external sources are **not** to be stored on the HCSO server

J. Storage of Digital Media:

1. The Hendry County Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring the integrity of all images captured in digital format.

K. Distribution of Images

1. All requests for copies of the images are processed and handled through the Records Unit.
2. Copies of images or prints of images for non-HCSO employees, such as private attorneys and any others authorized by the Public Records statute, are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Records Unit Supervisor. The requestor of the images is charged a fee set by the Records Unit to recover the costs according to Procedure 200.17.

## DEFINITIONS

**ARCHIVING** - Long-term storage of an image, document, or other material in accordance with retention laws.

**DIGITAL IMAGE** – An image that is stored in binary form.

**IMAGE** – An imitation or representation of a person or thing, drawn, painted, photographed, etc.

**IMAGE ENHANCEMENT** – Any process intended to improve the visual appearance of an image.

**IMAGE PROCESSING** – Any activity, which transforms an input image into an output image.

**MEMORY CARD** – A unique data/information storage card in some digital cameras utilized to record/save digital images.

**PROCESSED IMAGE** – An output image (See Image Processing).

**WORKING IMAGE** – Any image subjected to processing.

## REFERENCES

State/Federal Regulations:

None

CFA:

CFA Standard 27.03M

Forms:

None

Other Policy/ Procedure References:

200.17 Records